

EXHIBIT O

The Arab Volunteers in Afghanistan

[al-ansaru l-' arab fi afghanistan]
(Part I; sec. Ed.)

By Basil Muhammad

The book starts with a description of the Afghani jihad and the role of the Arab Afghans. The Arab Afghan forces were established by three people: Usamah bin Laden, Wael Julaidan, and Abdullah Azzam. After the introduction, the book describes bin Laden and his activities in Saudi Arabia. On page 32, the book describes the activities of Abdullah Azzam up until his arrival in Afghanistan. On page 33, the book describes the move of Wael Julaidan from university in Arizona to fight jihad in Afghanistan. From then on, the book generally describes the activities of these three people in the Afghan jihad, including the establishment of Makhtab al Khidmat and the Arab military training camps. It contains many names of Arab Afghan jihadists close to bin Laden, including several from the United States. The book is based primarily on interviews the author had with bin Laden, Azzam, Julaidan while fighting alongside them in Afghanistan. It was written by Adel Batterjee (a.k.a. Basil Muhammad), the founder of the Committee for Islamic Benevolence (a.k.a. Benevolence International Foundation) and former Secretary General of the World Assembly for Muslim Youth (WAMY). It was jointly published in 1991 by the Committee for Islamic Benevolence and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY).

{P. 26} One of the men who led the Arab Afghan Jihad forces came from one of the wealthiest Saudi families; he was influenced by the Afghan struggle, who would live together with them and sacrifice everything for the Afghani jihad. This man was Usamah bin Laden, a young tall man who followed Dr. Abdullah Azzam to fight in Afghanistan. Another Saudi joined together with them; his name was Wael Julaidan, a US student who was studying agriculture and left to fight jihad in Afghanistan.

These three; Usamah bin Laden (a.k.a. "Abu Abdallah"), Dr. Abdullah Azzam (a.k.a. Abu Muhammed), and Wael Julaidan (a.k.a. Abu Al-Hassen al-Madani); gathered together in December 1979 to create the new Islamic revolution in Afghanistan.

{P. 31} In 1979, Abu Abdallah (Usamah bin Laden) was not more than 22 years old, and he was hardly 70 kilos. He was very thin. He was 180 centimeters tall, but Usamah who was a graduate from the Economic Faculty from Abdulaziz Al Malik University in Jeddah, held a huge responsibility in running together with his nine brothers their father's properties.

...

Abu Abdallah said:

'In 1399, I remember I heard while I was in Jeddah that the Russian forces entered Afghanistan. This influenced me very much and I decided that I had to join my mujahideen brothers in Pakistan. It took me about two weeks to prepare myself and to collect some financing from my family and my brothers. One of the people was a friend who was teaching in Karachi and he is Abdullah al Jafari. I went to him together with my brother Mahrous and, at that time, the donations arrived through Jamaat e Islami. Shaykh Abu al Ali al Maududi, may he rest in peace, was sick so his deputy, Tafil Muhammed, was receiving the donations for the mujahideen. We met with Tafil and gave him the donations which we gathered and we participated only with financial assistance. But, the circumstances led us to take part in the jihad also. This continued until 1404."

{P. 112} " At that time Brother AbuDajana the Martyr – God bless his soul – kept the guest house under his control. An order was issued that no Arab Brother was to be found in the office. However wanted a place to stay had to do so inside the Baitu l-Muqaddas Camp in Babi. There were several rooms there, and every room had an Amir [incharge]. There were about 35 of us. I was staying in a room with the martyred Brother Sa'ud Al-Bahri, 'Uqba the Martyr, 'Abdu-l-Wahhab the Martyr, and Brother 'Abdu-l-Khaliq the Libyan, whose leg was cut by a mine, and Brother Ihsan from Madina. We were trained by Brothers Nuru-d-din and AbuFaras. AbuYusuf the Syrian gave us some lessons.

The increase in the number of Arabs on the scene led to an expansion of the training program. At the beginning of 85 an agreement was reached with Shaikh Sayyaf, who then was the head of the Union [of Mujahidin parties], to use the Salman Al-Farisi Camp on the way to Kunar [Afghan province bordering Pakistan] for the training of the Arabs. In April of the same year the first training course for Arabs was started, according to what Abu-r-Rida remembers. Some 25 of them were distributed over three tents. Their training was supervised by Afghan trainers. Among the first to join this camp for the first training course were Abu-r-Rida the Syrian and Walid Jalidan, both of whom arrived from America almost simultaneously, and both of whom decided to join the Afghan Jihad.

Abu-r-Rida relates: "We spent a week or ten days in the camp during which we received a quick introduction to the British gun Elmar, the Kalashnikoff, the Dashka, the Zikoyak and mines. Walid Jalidan joined us three days later. We felt that this training period was insufficient. So we went out, bought some bullets and bombs, returned to the camp and took another week of training."

Walid Jalidan remembers those days in the following words:

"The first training course for Arabs conducted in those days took place in the Salman Camp. The number of participants was not more than thirty. The trainer was an Afghan officer. Our commander in those days was Dr. AbuHudhaifa [probably 'Abdullah 'Azzam]."

Let us continue with Abu-r-Rida's report: "We took another week in the camp and then returned to Peshawar. There was a brother with us by the name of Abu-I-'Izz the Syrian who had shared the first training week with us in the camp. We asked where he was going. He replied 'I am going to Khost.'

Since entering the battle zone required a permission from Shaikh Sayyaf we went to get his approval and then went to Shakih Jalalu-d-din Haqqani's office to inquire whether anyone intended to go to Miranshah. We came across a commander by the name of Mahmud who spoke Arabic and led us to Shaikh Jalal in Miranshah whence we entered Legah in the area behind Jawar, right in front of the enemy. Within approximately three weeks which we spent with them we took part in an operation with howitzers. Since we felt, however, that they had no use for us, we returned to Jawar where we got to know 'Abdu-r-Rahman the Egyptian – God bless his soul – and with a brother by the name of Abu'Obaida the Iraqi. Those two were among the first whom we got to know. By that time they had already spent two or three years in the country."

As Walid Jalidan relates: "We wished that everyone coming after us should pass through the same method of preparation – by participating and sharing – as we had started with. The first thing we tried to do after getting was to get the members of all the parties together and agree on two issues, with the beginning of every day: after morning prayers we would get together for Koran recitation, while after the afternoon prayer we would get together to read some Hadith and benefit from them. After that, if they were any military operations, we would participate with them. At that time there were {P. 113} no more than 5-10 Arab brothers in each region. Those who preceded us were Brothers 'Abdu-r-Rahman the Egyptian and Abu'Obaida the Iraqi.

(23) The Martyr Hamdi Al-Banna

{P. 183} The clouds of ferocious fighting in the Khost area had hardly dispersed when in the North of the Jaji area a new battle broke out. Once again the highly developed Sukhoi planes were there to play their killing game with an unmatched superiority – in preparation of the onslaught that lasted for twenty days and was carried out by three thousand Russian and five thousand Afghan government troops.

On the morning of the 26th of Sha'ban 1986 began the aerial attack on Mujahidin encampments in Sayyaf's camp and in Ghund al-fath as well as their defensive positions in the area's mountains. The attack enjoyed the same superiority due to the newly

attached surface plates of the Sukhoi 25 planes that characterized them during their raids on the Mujahidin's positions and defenses in Jawar. These planes carried out their destructive assault over Jaji in preparation of the ground attack and the landing of elite paratroopers.

Arab presence in the Sadda camp began to grow until the Service Center agreed with Professor Sayyaf to establish a new place within this large camp for the training of the Arab brothers. Sadda had been put at Sayyaf's disposal by the Pakistan government somewhat earlier. It was situated in that mountainous region along the Afghan border. Some of the Arab brothers who had participated in the battles of Jawar had returned to Sadda and were there crammed together in an unfinished building. There were as yet no rules for living there, at a time when there were signs of new battles.

Abu Hajar relates: "I went with 'Isamuiddin the Libyan and a third person to Hikmatyar and told him 'BinLaden and Shaikh 'Abdullah ['Azzam] sent me to you to inform you that the brothers want to participate with you.' He told me to bring them. I told him 'we have different levels of experience and training -- from zero to one hundred.' He said 'you make the choice,' and turned away, talking on his wireless while studying the map in front of him. I understood that he was very busy, and also that he was flattering me by saying 'come!' In this way the Arabs came, just like they had gone into the Jawar battle, with very different levels of experience and a lack of coordination. Most of them did not know the area. They were all extremely eager to participate and join the battle. Brother 'Ali Ghazlan, who witnessed one side of this battle while waiting in Sadda and observing what was going on related: 'In Jaji the bombardment and fighting was severe. The Arabs were eager to participate, but they were not organized. They went twice and came back without having been able to capture a single position. We were about 60-70 brothers in Sadda {P. 184} and there was a strange chaos. They were taking groups of forty persons to Jaji, while some twenty remained in the camp on standby. BinLaden relates:

'The battle came and we were not prepared for it. The young people were new. Most of them came from S. Arabia and did not know to handle weapons. It did not make sense to take them into a fierce battle of this magnitude. After squeezing out the substance we remained with 32 brothers, four of them for medical tasks, and off we went. The aerial bombardment was unimaginable. It was absolutely crazy. A Mujahid would raise his Dashka or Zikoyak and fire, fire, fire, while the plane was right in front of him, seeing him with the bare eye, descending like a falcon without the anti-aircraft gun having any effect on it. The plane would drop two or three bombs on the fighter, turning him and those around him into smoke. In this way the

Mujahidin lost more than 40 anti-aircraft guns. I have never seen the morale of the Mujahidin so low as in that battle. And yet, God made some of them hold firm. One of them, who was barely fifteen years old, held one of the last remaining anti-aircraft guns when our brother Abu'Umar the Jordanian tried to explain to him the uselessness of anti-aircraft guns against this type of plane, telling him that we had lost enough of our combatants. But the boy refused and swore by God that he would not leave this position except as a martyr or wounded [using the words in the local language: barkhuda, ya zakhmi ya shahid]. And really, in the following attack he was wounded and was taken from above his gun bleeding from splinter wounds.

Dr. 'Abdullah 'Azzam records some of his reflections from this battle as follows:
 "I entered the Jaji camp during the battle. I was fasting and the sun was about to set behind the horizon. About sixty of us assembled in a cave when the planes attacked. One of those 1000 kilo bombs would have been enough to kill all of us. They penetrate the rock seven meters deep.'

{P. 185} BinLaden: "I was busy with the brothers digging a quick trench when we heard a loud explosion on top of the hill at the foot of which we were situated. Later it became clear that there had indeed been an anti-aircraft gun. It received a direct hit, which killed the five Afghan Mujahidin who were manning it. A huge piece of stone and metal splinters fell on us, killing one of our brothers, Hamdi Al-Banna, may God bless his soul. He was the first Egyptian to be martyred in Afghanistan. Three other brothers were injured. We left the slain brother, asking God for forgiveness and took the wounded ones. Two of them were able to walk, but the third one had a muscle cut and needed

to be carried. Due to the many attacks and the difficulty of moving in this mountain terrain with which we were not familiar, it took us more than an hour to cover just 150 meter. Because of this exertion and the exhaustion that befell us we broke our fast, even though it was Ramadan. Then we returned to bury our brother Hamdi. We were not done until approximately 5 p.m., while the air attacks continued.

{P. 186} Arab participation in the battle could not be called serious. The presence of so many of them without them fulfilling any function was a burden upon the Mujahidin - and upon themselves. Therefore BinLaden decided to take most of them back. BinLaden relates: "Our task was to mine the way leading up to the Mujahidin's camps, because some of the brothers had experience in this and some were even specialized. However, the dense bombardments prevented the Mujahidin from paying attention to us. Every question was answered with 'not available.' There was no use for light weapons, and it became clear that the place was unsuitable for the protection of the brothers and their lives. The heavy bombardment irritated the Mujahidin. Throwing new forces into the battlefield, forces unknown to the commander could only irritate him, more than it would help him. Therefore we decided to withdraw all of the brothers, leaving only seven of them behind. We thought it better to go to another area belonging to radius of the Al-Fath Base where there was less pressure than with Shaikh Sayyaf. We said let us take the area between both camps and cover it with the small groups that we had. We dispatched a vanguard of our people to Shaikh Hikmatyar to inquire about the feasibility of finding in this area an appropriate spot that would be far from the aerial bombardment and yet close to the battle ground. However, the enemy forces had advanced a

lot toward the Mujahidin positions, and this was a time when there were some 16 helicopters hovering around Jaji to throw back the Mujahidin should they pose a threat to the advancing paratroopers. This increased our worries. Most of the anti-aircraft guns were destroyed and people began to despair after they had given their best. At this point Almighty God sent a strong force of cold wind. I had passed several winter seasons in the region but never experienced the like of it, and we were in the midst of summer. It was so severe that some of the brothers on mountaintops were almost blown away. There were ten of the brothers participating with a vanguard of the Mujahidin. They were overcome by the night, the cold, hunger and fear. So they all returned. The only one who persevered was our brother M. Hasan Al-Iraqi. The wind worked wonders, all praise to God. It reminded us of the 'Battle of the Parties' [allusion to a battle of the Prophet mentioned in the Koran - Suratu l-ahzab]. God wished that a few rockets fired from Ghundu l-Fath that the enemy's vanguard be killed. God instilled fear in the hearts of the enemies. They thought that the Mujahidin resistance had finished altogether and began to retreat. At that moment some groups belonging to Sayyaf and Hikmatyar arrived. They were infantry led by a commander called Tufan, and engaged the enemy's vanguard in skirmishes. These clashes and the return of their tanks had a devastating effect on the enemy commandos, making them panick and retreat in disorder."

Abu r-Rida records another aspect of this battle, which he himself witnessed: "I came from Peshawar with Walid Jalidan and Abi l-Bara'. We were on our way to Sadda. Since however the place was new and we were not familiar with it we ended up in Parachinar where the ambulances of the Saudi Red Crescent were stationed. They had been sent there

by Walid Jalidan and waited at the Jihad Hospital that belonged to the Da'wa Committee. Walid Jalidan continued with them and three cars to Al-Fath whereas I returned with Abi l-Bara' to Sadda {P. 187}

Until the first quarter of the year 84, BinLaden used to frequently visit the Jama'at-e Islami in Lahore to hand over donations, over quite a period of time. But Osama remained scared to visit the battle front or even to travel beyond Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar. While letting memories of those days pass review, Osama relates them with great bitterness and says: "Until 1984 I was under the spell of a reluctance to join physically. This reluctance maintained its hold on me in various ways. There were always a lot of excuses for those who were reluctant, even though it was with the best of intentions. In the Islamic world people were simply not used to the atmosphere prevailing here. Unfortunately I continued like this - now I regret bitterly - until the month of Rajab of 1984, when for the first time I ventured into the interior to the battle fronts and Jihad."

The same reluctance has been mentioned by Dr. 'Abdullah 'Azzam:

"Brother Osama BinLaden came to Islamabad in 1984, bringing [financial] assistance. He dreaded going on to Peshawar. Some clever people confirmed him in that by saying that he should avoid being noticed, and so and so forth. I told him: Don't listen to anyone, go to Jaji where Shaikh Sayyaf is.

In Jaji, close to the international border separating Afghanistan and Pakistan, Shaikh Sayyaf, who was then head of the Union [of Mujahidin parties] had established a camp in the liberated areas. On one side it was overlooking the hills of Terimangal and

Parachinar, as well as dozens of villages and towns of Pakistan's Sarhad Province, the Frontier Province. On the other side were the hills of Jaji, covered by tall pine trees, shading the strategic path linking this point to several important Afghan provinces. Here Shaikh Sayyaf maintained several tents, one of which was reserved for Osama BinLaden when he set his foot for the first time on Afghan territory. Here BinLaden was able to observe the conditions of the Jihad and Mujahidin closely. He summed up his reaction by saying: "I was shocked to see the extremely miserable conditions and the lack of facilities for everything: weapons, roads, trenches. Asking Almighty God for forgiveness I felt guilty for having listened to the advice of some brothers, and shaikhs, and relatives, who told me not to go to the interior as that would be a security risk for me. I felt that this delay of four years could only be remedied by martyrdom in the path of God."

He then added: "At seven a.m. on the 27th of Ramadan of 1984 most people in the camp were sleeping. It was Ramadan, people had spent the night as the Night of Might [a kind of Muslim Holy Night]. Therefore we did not wake up until we heard the sound of bomber planes and the heavy weapons of the Mujahidin, such as the Dashka and Zikoyak, firing from the hilltops, while we were beneath them in the valley. This Jaji Camp consisted of no more than a few tents, one of them belonging to Shaikh Sayyaf, with those of the Mujahidin around it. Then there was one special tent set aside for Arab visitors.

There were also six or seven brothers from Sharqiya [may be this is a printing mistake and he means

Sharjal, among them brother Salem Al-Ghamedi.. The bombardment from the planes began and everyone was amazed to see one plane fly extremely low, in a way that seemed to be illogical, all the while bombarding. By the grace of God the rockets that fell outside the camp caused a terrible noise that made the Mujahidin's guns sound as if they were nothing, whereas when you hear those guns alone, you think there is no sound fiercer than that.

As for the rockets that fell into the camp, by the grace of God they did not explode, just pieces of iron crashing on the ground. In those moments I felt very small and near to God as I never felt before. We had just light weapons and our prayers. Suddenly a plane crashed, I believe it was a a Mig 21, it crashed on the slope opposite from us, where a number of Afghan Mujahidin had gathered. The plane flew lower and lower until it was at the height of our eyes. At that moment the brothers fired, and I advanced a little. By the grace of God they hit it well with their weapons. It fell right in front of them, and not one of them suffered any harm. In the same manner the Mujahdin brought another plane down, a Sukhoi 26 according to what they said. I at that time did not know the different types of planes.

I saw the remainders of the pilot with my own eyes. He came to tear the Mujahdin apart, but God had him cut to pieces. We found only three of his fingers and the skin of his face along with the ear and his hair, as well as a portion of his neck and back. Some of the Afghan brothers filmed him, he was like a slaughtered and skinned ram. There was jubilation, and the morale of the Mujahidin rose to the point of frenzy. On that day Shaikh Sayyaf was present in the camp, so the Mujahidin brought the door of a helicopter and parts of another helicopter which they said they had shot down in an

area at only one kilometer distance from us. So altogether there were four aircraft shot down.

It has to be born in mind that the Arabs were the only ones who took shelter in the trenches whereas not a single Afghan did so. After three hours of battle, during which those four aircraft were shot down, everything was over, and by the grace of God not one of the brothers was hurt. . For me this battle was really a big boost that motivated to carry on. It gave us the assurance that no one is hit except if that was destined for him by God.

The air attack was over, but BinLaden had not yet finished his visit to the area. Some 20-30 kilometers from the camp where the attack had taken place was a government garrison in a fortress called Chauni, situated on a natural hill overlooking the valley that spread for many miles between mountain chains of equal height.

In that area Chauni was the Mujahidin's chief target. Therefore BinLaden - this important guest - had to closely inspect the place. This was one of the rites performed by important guests who have as yet no experience of penetrating into the interior and participating in real battles. BinLaden relates that "after the battle we went to Chauni until we were no more than 1200 meters far from it. The people of this area were all on the side of the Mujahidin, but the scarcity of arms did not allow them to participate in military operations, except for a small elite band. They could shoot no more than six rockets, which they were carrying, along with the canon, on a mule, to the place that was furthest from the center and closest to the enemy, then they returned."

He (BinLaden) added: "On that day `Omar Seif came to us, a Yemeni Sheikh who was more than seventy

years old. At that time the Mujahidin had received sic MP rockets. Because of the scarcity of this weapon at that time Shaikh Sayyaf and the Mujahidin celebrated its arrival like a holiday. We then went along with it in order to be present when it would be fired on the fortress. Because of the lack of other possibilities, the weapon had to be fixed directly on the ground. An Iraqi brother, M. Hasan Rabad, who was in the vicinity of Chauni, did the targeting. We heard him say to the machine: one went half a kilometer behind Chauni, another half a kilometer before Chauni.

Although the target was so huge the lack of facilities to fix the gun on the target prevented us from hitting it. But God be praised nonetheless. The important thing was the applause. The Mujahidin were very happy about these rockets, given the scarcity of weapons at that time, even RPGs. I remember a group that came from Logar and other areas. Finding 100 RPGs in the Jaji area they reproached the brothers saying: 'you have 100 RPGs in this areas whereas we have only three or four'."

In this way BinLaden diagnosed the real wound. He was now fully convinced that the methods of dispatching supplies used hitherto did not make things reach the war fronts and had to be changed. With his specialization and the experience he had gained working with his brothers in building the famous tunnels of Mecca he now began to toy with the idea of applying his expertise to the mountains of Jaji. The thought did not take long to crystallize in his mind. What was initially a mere idea was soon put by him into reality. As BinLaden himself says:

"After my visit to Afghanistan I became convinced of the necessity of road and tunnels for the Mujahidin over there. Whatever few roads there

existed were short and narrow. The Mujahidin need tunnels to store their arms and maintain hospitals, as well as resting places for the people.. When I say people I mean the good ones who love Jihad and Islam. The infidels, the Russians and the Americans, have so much impacted the minds of Muslims, making them believe that they [the infidels] are indefatigable super powers, that they have all kinds of gadgets and intelligence and stuff of that type. Most of that is inflated and far from true. If people were to believe in those exaggerations they would stop to move. I was then told:

First, how will you get them [the machines] out of the kingdom [S. Arabia]?

Second, how will you get them into Pakistan, by declaring them as what?

Third, the area where you are going to work is notorious for the anti-Mujahidin stance of its people who will report things to the enemy. You are not coming with an ordinary bike. These machines resemble more tanks. The moment you appear with them they will be destroyed by planes.

I said, well, if that happens we shall ask God's pardon, and if not, we shall do our work.

We got them into the country in the name of the Mujahidin via the Saudi Red Crescent. May God reward the Ambassador, AbuMuhammad (Taufiq `Alamdar). He helped very much in getting them in. So the work began."

The Sha`ban Battle

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The young men of Al-Ma`sadda were full of zest, bursting with vitality and longing for activity. They had tasted easy victory and experienced the pleasure of quick success. When Abu`Abdillah

allowed them to bombard the government outpost it was a moral boost to them that filled them with enthusiasm. This decision itself was a turning point in the development of Al-Ma'sadda, making it the scene of direct confrontation. It meant responding to the challenge a year and a half after its creation. Abu'Abdillah says:

"I felt that the brothers had not yet reached the level that would allow them to meet the enemy. The base had not yet been developed to the point that it could withstand a direct confrontation, despite the brothers' high morale and their patience. The few trenches in Al-Ma'sadda were hardly worth mentioning. We did not want to deal the enemy a blow that would not break his back but rather expose us to his reactions that we were ill prepared to meet. But then the number of brothers increased and they continued training. When the Egyptian commander AbuKhalid came, together with Abu'Obaida, they reasoned that, despite our limited resources, we were in a position to win a battle and take the outpost called 'Mother of Trenches' as well as the outpost called An-Nayima.

Some of the young men had wanted to leave the Jihad, disappointed that with us they got no chance to take part in operations. They could not put up with a Jihad that had become a war of fixed positions and us not leading them into action. The decision for a Sha'ban Battle (Sha'ban is an Islamic month) was a compromise, therefore, especially since some of them would go back and tell people that they had spent six months without having fired a single shot at the enemy. People believe that Mujahidin do not stand in need of victory. But not all of them have a strong enough awareness to understand that the Jihad will go on for a long time. Obedience has its limits, especially since only few of the brothers have

known us for a long time, even though the group has been together for six months, digging trenches and undergoing weapons' training. Anyhow, they are just common Muslims, not military personnel. All these reasons pushed us to take this decision. In addition there was the opinion of AbuKhalid and Abu`Obaida, men with military experience, who said that we were in a position to carry out the battle."

To a large extent the attack idea was clear and simple. The Arab brothers had kept a strict surveillance on the "Mother of Trenches" and the Nayima outpost next to it. As mentioned earlier, they had carried out some skirmishes against both outposts. Since these two positions were closer to Al-Ma'sadda than other outposts it was but logical to choose them as the first targets for an attack from Al-Ma'sadda. Our military operations aimed at liberating the valley with the surrounding hills from enemy forces. That was to be expected and we had been waiting to do so. As for the attack plan itself, let AbuKhalid brief us about it, since he was the battle leader.

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"I got news that the brothers in Al-Ma'sadda were preparing a military operation to break the stalemate in the area and to raise the morale of the Arabs and Afghans by inflicting losses on the enemy. Together with AbuHafs I then went to Al-Ma'sadda where we met Shaikh Banshiri (Pansheri) as Abu`Obaida the Egyptian was called. In the course of our consultations we reached a consensus to carry out a fire attack against both enemy outposts as well as against Khirshtal. We would make use of this bombardment to liberate two positions close to

us that are among important enemy outposts, to wit, the 'Mother of Trenches' and 'An-Nayima.' Making all the necessary preparations we divided the Ma'sadda forces into two major sections:

The first one we called the 'Terror Group.' Its task was to take all enemy posts under concentrated fire, from far, directing rocket and cannon fire at them.

The second we called the 'Conquest Group.' Its task was to occupy both outposts, take prisoners, destroy the fortifications, and return to Al-Ma'sadda. The second group was in turn divided into three branch groups: two for penetrating the positions and the third to secure the terrain."

Abu`Abdillah himself continues the description of the battle preparations as follows:

"Over a period of two weeks we sent a group of brothers to keep watch on the 'Mother of Trenches' and An-Nayima. They were seven, of whom I remember Shafiq and AbuDhahab, who were joined by Usama. We went to see them, AbuKhalid the Egyptian, AbuHafs the Egyptian, and I. They had erected a tent below the 'Mother of Trenches,' to the South of it. In our positions that were not more 100 meters from the enemy we could see them and hear their voices. In the night, using night glasses, the brothers got as close as 30 meters to them. All that prevented them from entering the outpost were the mines!"

At noon time you could go there and find Shafiq and Dhabih sleeping. Once when I got there together with AbuHafs the Egyptian I found one of the brothers sleeping peacefully as if he were at home. He was exhausted from his night watch. I was asked a religious question that greatly impressed me and I asked myself, is not a great thing at the end of times there are people in Muhammad's Community who

ask this question! They asked me, 'are we allowed to follow the ritual when we hear them call to prayer, or do we call to prayer and pray?'

This was because some government soldiers, who are in the army as forced conscripts, perform the call to prayer and pray. I said, 'praised be the Lord Who will be pleased that you get so close to the enemy that you hear his soldiers' call to prayer. By God, I like this question more than the answer.

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Usama "Azmarai" recorded his reminiscences of those days as follows:

"The last time I went from Peshawar to Jaji I found Abu'Abdillah and greeted him, - in those days my hand was still paining because the wound had not fully healed. He told me that Shafiq, AbuDhahab, Dhabih, Sakhri, Bishi, and Husain the Libyan were in the tent beneath the 'Mother of Trenches.' I then took my leave from him in order to join them quickly. He told to me to wait however. I had arrived in the afternoon and he made me stay over night. In the morning I set out and got to the tent. Abu'Abdillah had handed the Badr Room over to 'Abdu-r-Rahman the Egyptian. He trusted him after he had undergone a good amount of practical training that enabled him to shoot from Badr with a Howitzer or a Cannon 75. He knew how to organize the men there and to lead them and he was familiar with the mountain in which Badr is situated. Therefore I began to move between the tent and Badr.

In this period good things happened to Al-Ma'sadda and the life of the brothers who had come for Jihad. Whenever the brothers who listened to the enemy got to hear something alarming they reinforced their night vigil. I liked their way of

combining listening and seeing which enabled them to gather the largest amount of information on the enemy's movement.

One night Abu'Abdillah contacted us at Badr, asking us to be extremely vigilant. It was as if they had information that the enemy was likely to try and penetrate from the Badr side. That night we sent the men out and fixed the arms in their place, thinking how to ward off any force coming up to us. There were only few trenches, and those had been dug by the Russian commandos who had been there before us. All the same, we put two persons into each place, with one sleeping bag for the two of them, so one would wake while the other sleeps. Myself and another brother would go round to check on them and then move down to contact the brothers below to find out if there was anything suspicious going on.

From that point on we were experiencing progress in Al-Ma'sadda inasmuch as use of the wireless and the coordination of the different positions is concerned. This enabled our leader, Abu'Abdillah, to dispatch any group from any side at any time.

The only problem was that some of the new brothers could not be easily made to stick to discipline. Some of them were constantly hyper. They might see a monkey or some imaginary creature move around in the trees and would open fire rightaway. They were just not given to reflection and were not familiar with the terrain. For this reason we took the new ones round on inspection tours of the area as a kind of refreshment training, even if they had received training in Sadda.

While we were busy doing this the leadership was fully occupied doing many things at a time. They were forced to thing practically. While it had been

difficult to take the decision in the first place, giving the instructions was quite easy, though implementing it could be difficult again. The brothers began {P. 264} defining the weapons they wanted. Brother AbuKhalid the Egyptian was a military officer, and so was AbuHafs. Their thinking and planning was of a military type, therefore. The conditions of an army do of course differ from those of the Mujahidin or the guerrilla units amongst whom we are living. This was the cause for a number of disparities. The essential shortcoming, however, was that they were too theoretic in their thinking and that they took greater interest in the planning aspect than in the practical side and the implementation. As is well-known, the more complicated a plan is the more difficult it is to carry it out. The entire program was time-bound, and any program that depends on proper timing is difficult to carry out. For instance, the brothers wanted there to be fifty P.M. rockets, but they did not take into consideration the time it takes to move those fifty rockets to the bottom of the valley, which means a march of an hour and a half by itself. Then moving them again to the top, which requires a minimum of 45 minutes, to which is to be added another half an hour to set up each one of the rockets and point it towards its target.

I believe that had they moved the weapons first and then fixed the time for the operation it would have been more appropriate. They, however, fixed first the time, coordinated it with the other Mujahidin, without having anything moved to its place yet."

Fixing the zero hour for the start of the battle was not up to the Arabs alone, it had to be coordinated with the Afghans in the Ittihad and the

Hizb. This meant taking into consideration their special circumstances and opinions, even if they would not directly participate. Abu-r-Rida relates: "Abu'Abdillah was of the opinion that we should work things out with the Hizb in Ghundu-l-fath and with the Ittihad, with each one separately. Given our good relations with all of them we reached an agreement and requested Al-Fath to help us bombard Chauni with L.P.M. Dwazda, and also to fire on the outposts in the valley.

Shaikh Sayyaf said: 'I am coming to you on Sunday to see.' We started to move the P.M. rockets before Sayyaf even arrived. Together with the other things we moved the rockets on the four or five mules that we had to the observation tent. The idea was to have all the weapons together in one place and then to distribute them from there.

Shaikh Sayyaf's coming on Sunday was to serve the purpose of devising a battle plan, but when he arrived on Sunday he simply said, 'the operation will take place tomorrow, Monday.'

Sure, we had planned the operation and worked things out with the Hizb, but our preparations were not yet completed, so we told him, 'Shaikh, we are not ready yet, it is impossible.'

I remember that he gave us two or three days, maximum, to complete everything, prepare and start executing the operation. We all thought that those three days would be enough because our planning was done. All that was left to do {P. 265} was to make the weapons and ammunition reach the nearby tent. In reality the time was less than required however. When the mules were about to die because of exhaustion we were forced to open another way to the valley bottom, which we did by using a bulldozer. Then we sent the stuff by car."

Services Office

[p. 193] By the end of 1985 most of the committees of the Services Office had crystallized and began to function. Here is what AbuHájar says: "As for the Education Committee, there was a project to assess the number of schools belonging to the [jihad] organizations and to make provisions for their needs in terms of teachers and lady teachers, be it by paying their salaries or by making some Arabs, both male and female, join the teaching task. Once this was done the committee tried to get a clear picture of the educational situation in the interior. After relying on others to assess the schools and the number of students and teachers, the Arabs became personally present there, by setting up schools, by dispatching Arab supervisors to inspect, observe and get an idea of the efficiency by assessing the Afghans."

In this context Abu-r-Rida mentions the following: "Brother Jamal Khalifa (Abu-l-Bara) was the one who started the educational project, both in the interior of Afghanistan and abroad. Thanks to Dr. `Abdullah `Azzam's efforts he succeeded in getting the approval of the Muslim World League to open an office for the League in Peshawar as an umbrella under which the brothers could work and move in Pakistan freely. Initially this office was paid for by Abu`Abdillah, later donations began to come from the kingdom [of S. Arabia]."

As mentioned by the magazine *Al-Jihad*, later on "coordination was perfected and it was agreed upon that the educational tasks begun by the Office should be put under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Aid Foundation [mu'assasatu l-'auni l-islami] in Peshawar, which was run by the Office in Pakistan and Afghanistan under the supervision of Dr. `Abdullah `Azzam. This was done so that the work should have an official cover distinct from the relief work undertaken by the Office in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The activities of the Islamic Aid Foundation were divided in the following manner:

Comment: L-

1. Education in the refugee camps.
2. The creation of schools and institutes inside Afghanistan.

3. The creation of institutes for the Ansar [helpers] in Peshawar and Quetta.
4. The printing of teaching programs and their dispatch to the Afghan interior."

AbuHajar adds: "At that time there was a clinic to receive the wounded Afghans which formed part of the Health Committee. In actual fact, however, it took in those Afghans whose treatment had already been completed and who were now to undergo 'natural treatment' so that their limbs should not become dysfunctional. Those with artificial limbs were trained to use them."

After the work of the Health Committee had developed, the magazine *Al-Jihad* commented:

"The Office's purview expanded to comprise the following activities in the health sector:

1. The creation of the only central laboratory in the Sarhad Province [N.W.F.P.] which offers its services to all the Islamic hospitals serving the Muhajirin [refugees] and the Mujahidin.
2. The establishment of the Mecca Hospital for the wounded in Baluchistan, which was later on handed over to the Saudi Relief Committee, allowing the Office to concentrate on support for the battle fronts inside Afghanistan.
3. The creation of a clinic for natural treatment in cooperation with the Saudi Relief Committee. After four years in operation it was handed over to the Saudi Red Crescent for the same reason mentioned above.
4. The creation of a center for the handicapped heroes from among the Afghan leaders. Later this was changed into a center to look after the families of those handicapped people in the Afghan interior. Once the Office's sphere of [p 194] activities inside Afghanistan was broadened, such care was considered as more urgent and also less costly and burdensome.
5. Putting doctors and nursing personnel at the disposal of the battle fronts.
6. A project of challenge to educational medicine inside Afghanistan, which was then handed over to Al-Birr Committee to finance and supervise it."

"As for the Conveyance Committee," AbuHajar continues, "it made good progress and helped tens of thousands of Mujahidin to get back into the interior. The responsible officer for this committee was Abu-I-Hasan [Wa'il Julidan]. As regards the Technical Committee it provided for or took care of the repair of some electronic and wireless equipment in use among the Mujahidin. Its general purpose was to teach the Afghans the proper use of such equipment after they had been feeling helpless when confronted with such complicated devices."

This is still AbuHajar speaking, who was at that time the director of the Office: "During the early days of my stay there I was entrusted with the Maintenance Division of the Technical Committee, whereas 'Abdu-I-Haqq the Algerian, of blessed memory, was in charge of designing. During the first three months which I passed in the committee, before I took over the administration of the Office, we kept busy maintaining the equipment and training the Afghan brothers in its use."

AbuHajar then proceeds to speak about the achievements of the Information Committee which comprised the magazine *Al-Jihad*, and *Maj*, the mirror of the Afghan jihad. He relates: "The magazine was being improved upon and was competing with *Al-Bunyan Al-Marsus*. As for *Maj*, in its days it produced three films, *Chaoni 1*, *Chaoni 2*, and *The Jihad Mirror*. Abu'Imran, the brother incharge of this work, was constantly making every possible effort to make pictures and films of the jihad get to him from the interior in a regular manner.

As for the Services Committee, and by that I mean the Reception Committee, the brothers AbuDajjana the Egyptian, of blessed memory, and Abu-s-Sa'id the Syrian began to introduce orderliness in the presence of the brothers and to teach them discipline. The majority of the brothers, however, refused to comply! AbuDajjana introduced a register into which to enter *exit from* and *return to* the Office, placing it at the door. Some brothers felt bothered, however. Under the question "Where do you go?" they wrote "I don't know." And where the register says "Time of return" they wrote "only God knows." This kind of behavior made 'Abdu-I-Mannan, of blessed memory, explode with anger and scream "this is Freemasonry!" The brothers did not abide by the rules. Finally AbduDajjana took his

leave and went to Nangarhar, for three, four days. He left and stayed away for about 7-9 months, abandoning the work. The first thing he did after coming back was to go on pilgrimage, then he returned to the battle front. We ask God Almighty that he may have taken him from the front straight to paradise. After AbuDajjana, of blessed memory, this task went to Abu-r-Rida, then to Abu-s-Sa'id, and from him to AbuDu'a the Yemenite.

AbuHajar goes on with his report: "As for the Military Committee, praise be to God, the brothers began to register those who entered Afghanistan and the places where they were found in the provinces. Prior to this the brothers had become used to carelessness in this matter. For instance, one of them would be sent to Baghlan [east of Central Afghanistan] but he would arrive in Herat [extreme Northwest]! In this committee they began to provide those leaving for the interior with a recorder and a camera and tell him to meet the leaders there and take a few snaps of the battle fronts, so that he would come back from there with a wealth of information and valuable media material which they could then use in the distribution of the aid and relief goods.

As for the issue of training, the brothers acquired a degree of carefulness in that.

[p. 195:] The Military Committee began to read the specific literature and to write small manuals about the weapons and military sciences. The Office also was keen on establishing training camps for Afghans, be they from among the leaders or the Mujahidin. Those training camps would have a duration of two to three weeks and comprise educational and military programs aiming not only at those two aspects, but also at a uniting of hearts and the extirpation of party politics among the Afghans. In this way they brought together large numbers of Mujahidin from Hizb-e Islami [Hikmatyar], from Jam'iyat [Rabbani] and from the Ittihad [Sayyaf], all in one camp and within one and the same program. Unfortunately, however, the Afghans did not respond positively to this method, rather they insisted on having separate camps. The Arabs then compromised with these realities and opened training camps in Babi, to which they appointed Arabs as directors.

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Thus, at the beginning of 1986, the committees of the Services Office crystallized. Now began the phase of operation. The general administration of the committees and the Office, however, did not crystallize fully and did not become stable yet. Dr. `Abdullah `Azzam was still shuttling between Peshawar and Islamabad where he taught at the university during the first days of the week [Saturday-Monday], only to return to Peshawar on Tuesday. On Saturday morning he would then return to the capital again. Abu` Abdillah (Usama BinLadin) was still shuttling between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, or Pakistan and Afghanistan, without regularity or stability. Conditions in the administration of the Office and in the council were always tense and disturbed. The lack of harmony took its toll. Whenever things were a little better a new storm would be brewing. Abu` Abdillah puts it as follows:

"Among the brothers entering the battle of life and testing it there but few with a religious upbringing and an Islamic consciousness and ethics. This had a negative effect on the presence of the Arabs in general, and at that time it used to disturb the functioning of the administration. Yet we believe that the positive contribution made by the brothers was, by the grace of God, much more than the negative aspects that surfaced."

It may be premature to mention here the causes of those disturbances in detail, though Abu` Abdillah's wording expresses the essentials of those causes, placing them under two major categories which are: ethics and experience, in other words, piety and efficiency. This was a time when Peshawar witnessed an increasing influx of jihad fans and people inspired by the news of heroic deeds, victories and miracles in Afghanistan. However, those were not all of the same educational level, nor were they equal in terms of preparedness or commitment. The majority of the truly committed ones, the morally upright and pious ones, on the other hand, lacked sufficient experience and did not fulfill the requirements of administrative or organizational work. When at the beginning of 1986 AbuHájar was entrusted with the administration of the Services Office he had endure for six consecutive months the dust storm of disputes and quarrels, while he was a man replete with the spirit of order, seriousness and self-discipline in dealing with others and with

himself, abiding both by lofty ideals and customs. It all ended with his irrevocable resignation, at a moment when Arab participation on the scene began to make a difference. AbuHájar says: "I began the work in the Maintenance Division for the technical equipment where I continued for about three months."

[p. 196] He adds: "Just upon my arrival at the end of October 1985 I began to hear all kinds of complaints and negative comments. I would turn away from all that and get even more engrossed in my work. The Arabs present there at that time were altogether about seventy. We may say that roughly half of them were in Afghanistan and half of them in Pakistan. As the complaints increased, the brothers would gradually involve me in their meetings and Shaikh `Abdullah would me push forward to be the Imam. Finally the brothers were compelled to change the administrative team. Then there emerged a consensus to hold elections for the council and administration of the Office."

In those days the administration of the Office had been passed on to AbyHudhaifa the Jordanian who was assisted by AbuDa'ud. This happened after AbuAkram left the scene and returned to Jordan. While starting the set up the Services Office Shaikh `Abdullah `Azzam had chosen AbuAkram to be his administrative assistant. AbuHudhaifa's directorship was subject to severe objections from the brothers present, and this conflict was the decisive factor that finally led to new elections for the administration of the Office and the Council. It was an attempt to overcome the conflict and to correct the course. AbuHajar says: "It was strange to see a consensus emerge that the Council should be composed of fifteen persons elected from among the 35 brothers present. I told them: 'Gracious God! 15 from among 35 is almost the half. Imagine us to put the world's administration into the hands of half of its population, to rule the other half!' Yet they insisted on that number. The strangest thing was that the largest number of votes went to brother Muhammad the Sudanese, and the second largest number to my poor self! What a surprise. What's that? I had been there for hardly three months and did not really know the scene as I ought to. But people turn towards those who act as Imam or preacher. They do not ask 'does he understand? Does he have the experience? Had they asked those questions then I ought to have been the last person to be chosen for these tasks. My election took me by surprise. When they decided that AbuMuhammad the Sudanese be the director he declined, in the first

meeting, he and AbuSuhail left together. We then began to look at each other: who should succeed him? We then got together in a second meeting with the purpose of determining who should act on behalf of Shaikh `Abdullah in his absence. When the counting of the votes started the first paper said Abu-I-Hasan, the second AbuSayyaf or Abu`Abdirrahman the Egyptian, the third Abu-I-Hasan, and after that every single vote said AbuHajar, AbuHajar, AbuHajar. When I read the first of those papers I laughed. They asked 'why do you laugh?' I told them: 'can you imagine, one of the brothers wrote my name!' Then I opened the second: 'what is this?' Then the third one. My face turned red and I said: 'this is obviously a joke. Then I let them begin to talk about the duties of the director general.'

And yet, AbuHajar had no choice but to shoulder the responsibility of this position which later on he would reject irrevocably. May be the most important and the most crucial initiative in terms of self-criticism witnessed during the period of Arab presence was the one registered by AbuHajar during those six months of his tenure as director of the Services Office. He graciously allowed me to read it, in addition to what he told me verbally, supporting my effort to document this [Arab] presence with all its positive and negative aspects.

AbuHajar says: "I found myself confronted with a huge pile of mistakes, beginning with the method of calling upon people to join the jihad and the subsequent problems [p. 197] that are so difficult to resolve. We tried to deal with the brothers in the best possible way, but I must confess that it was a mistake to have chosen me, just as my way to run the administration was a mistake. I used to take people the way they are being described in books. I thought if I tell someone 'fear God,' that's it, he would fear God. Or 'do this,' and he would do it. I thought it would work the way I turn a switch, turning it to the right the light would go on, to the left, it would go out. This is how people would be with me. My mind was conditioned by my work in repairing instruments. Seeing that this board would not work because of the transistor, I would not be bothered, I would remove the board with pliers, throw it away and put in another one. If that one would not work either, I would throw it into the garbage and fix a new one in its place! But it turned out that dealing with new brothers in this way was a wrong procedure. The biggest mistake was not to take their individual traits

into account. Dealing with the Arabs was the most difficult thing to do. The root cause for this is that in our countries we lived the previous phases of our lives under oppression. This left us with two attitudes. The first one is observable among persons who assume leadership. Having been ruled oppressively we turn oppressors ourselves the moment we are given a position of power.

Shortly after my arrival I was struck to notice that some people imagined the Mujahidin to be angels. Upon reading that the peak of Islamic values is jihad in the path of God such a person would dream of throwing all of the brothers on that peak. Earlier I had written a note in which I said: 'All people coming here are supposed to have come for the sake of jihad and not for name and fame, because if that is what they had in mind, then they had better not come.' Upon reflecting upon this expression however I asked myself: 'Is there a guarantee that the good intentions will stay? Is it possible that the firmness of resolve gets lost on the way of truth? Or are the hearts being tossed about by the All-Merciful as He pleases? If that is the case then the confusion and lack of watchfulness over persons will help the devil to get the better of a brother and gradually make him forget what brought him here. This made it imperative to follow the shari'a. It also required us to master the art of choosing the right place at the right time for the right person and for the right type of project. This demanded from us mentalities conditioned by the shari'a, first and foremost, mentalities that must also be oriented toward administration. There is nothing wrong with that, because administration is part of our religion too. If I were to say that in chaos there is a blessing, that would be tantamount to using the sanctity of terms for the wrong objects, meaning to cover our mouths and justify our chaotic behavior.

To sum up, the Office tried to move in one direction, but had to cope with strong counter currents. In the final days, therefore, I became certain that my work could not go on in this manner. Abu-I-Bara the Sa'udi explained this to me by way of analogy: 'You face reality like a wall that you want to tear down. You hit it with your fists as strong as you can, without knowing whether it will fall on yourself or on a person walking past behind the wall, someone who has got nothing to do with the matter. Once you are confronted with such piles it is difficult to ameliorate things except gradually. This requires someone

fully aware of the problem who knows how to take the wall apart bit by bit.'

Therefore I told Shaikh `Abdullah during my last days in the Council: 'Look, my Shaikh, you have a place in our hearts and will always be highly esteemed, no matter what. I will not forget your kindness towards me. I learned theoretical

[p. 198] jihad from the books, and I read about it in the Qur'an and the Sunna. Practical jihad, however, I learned it from you. If not for reading your book I would not have come here.

After I related to the Shaikh a host of irregularities that had taken place, I informed him that at the end of this month of Ramadan, which was about to begin, I would hand in my definite resignation. In view of my insistence on resigning and the Shaikh's urging that I stay the Council meeting was convened for the month of Shawwal, after our return from Sadda and from the battle of Jaji. At that meeting we were to vote on the issue.

I told them: 'Look, brothers! We are doctors now, and we are holding in our hands a patient who is breathing his last and is about to die. It is better for you not to discuss now whether I am right in my diagnosis or not. Let us go ahead, take my hand into yours and together let us treat the patient who is dying. Because if you are going to demonstrate to me that he is cured from his diseases I am afraid he is going to die right in our midst.

After some discussion they asked me what would be the solution. I told them that it was very difficult to answer this. 'The solution lies in the solution.' They replied, 'how can you say that?' I told them that it was better to dissolve this work than have it dissolve itself. Afterwards we can start afresh, on sound foundations and with a clear and well thought out plan."

Thus it appears that a change of the administration did little to change the negative reality and did not constitute a course correction as hoped for by those who were demanding the change. AbuAhmad the Syrian was present there during this period and witnessed everything closely, also participating in the elections for the Council. He saw the root causes for the failure in a duplicity that occurred in the

administration of Arab affairs, rather than trying to bring about change for the sake of making up for past mistakes. He said: 'From among the fifteen Council members only four voted for AbuHudhaifa, and he was not even present, keeping himself busy elsewhere. By contrast AbuMuhammad the Sudanese was voted for by the majority. In the first meeting after the elections, however, he told Shaikh `Abdullah: 'I beseech you in the name of God to accept my resignation and not to ask me why I am resigning.'

So we voted once again and this time elected AbuHajar. But the truth is that AbuHudhaifa continued as before, as if this was the most natural thing. Since the Shaikh did not perceive any change he continued presenting him as his deputy. When reproached for doing so he said: 'This is my personal deputy and that is a matter different from the administration of the Office!'

Unfortunately AbuHudhaifa began to oppose the Committee [probably he means the Council] as if he were waging war against it, fighting especially against AbuHajar."

In that period Abu`Abdillah (Usama BinLadin) visited Pakistan and Afghanistan at short intervals, becoming regular in his devotion to the scene while abandoning his professional responsibilities in the kingdom. In the words of AbuRida: "In March 1986 Abu`Abdillah brought up the idea of his coming to Pakistan to devote himself to commercial activities there, especially after having received constant complaints about the mismanagement of his funds in the Services Office."

Despite those complaints, and even though Abu`Abdillah was aware of the lack of discipline prevailing in the Office since he had begun to experience its reality and become closely acquainted with its ins and outs, he continued nonetheless to take care of the entire expenditure for the Arab brothers (This was confirmed to me by Dr. `Abdullah, of blessed memory, who estimated the budget for those expenses at \$ 300,000 per year, which includes the living costs of the Arab brothers alone so that they would not have to take from [p. 199] the donations that were meant for the Afghan Mujahidin). Abu`Abdillah was sufficiently satisfied with the way in which AbuHajar handled the administration, with his constant insistence on discipline, order, and

seriousness. This made Abu`Abdillah keep on encouraging AbuHajar and to support him in such a way as to make him feel less frustrated.

In the words of AbuHajar: "Abu`Abdillah tried to back me up in the Council and to support the line that he wanted to see followed. Promising me with better results he made me hopeful again. Yet I also told him that the issue was beyond him, especially since he was not free to devote himself entirely to this work. When he learned about my resignation, he tried very seriously to make me change my mind. Whenever he came to me at a moment when I felt injured, he cured my wounded feelings and inspired me with confidence and zest for the work, giving me hope for the future. In the last days of my administration of the Office we took a resolve - I, Abu`Abdillah and some other brothers - to try to put the work on a correct course. At that time it was Ramadan, or almost. We decided to chose a separate place to receive the newcomers where we would train them, far from the problems of the Services House. We agreed upon a comprehensive policy of how to take in the brothers after having chosen and trained them. And we tried to keep this matter to ourselves. As far as I remember we then agreed upon three different places. One was in Sadda, the second in Jalalabad, and the third in Khost or else in Jawar or Jihadwal. In Jalalabad we already had a group of 20-30 persons. Since AbuAnis had been put in charge this was known as the AbuAnis Group. The group did actually take part in military operations alongside the Afghan Mujahidin and the students of the Shari`a Academy that formed part of the Mission Committee [*ajnatu d-da`wa*]. Those were successful operations in the course of which some 18 government posts were taken. Muhannad told me that it took them 45 days to transport all the spoils. We then thought of moving this group to Khost but in the end we decided for Sadda. We then went - Abu`Abdillah, a few of the brothers and I - and began to establish our outpost over there, in the month of Ramadan, setting up some three tents. Sadda, however, was territory of Shaikh Sayyaf, therefore it took Shaikh `Abdullah only a few days to find out about it, whereupon we said to ourselves, we have to try to keep this secret even then. In those days the brothers would say, even outside Pakistan, 'go to the Warsak Camp,' for instance! For this reason we wanted to keep Sadda away from this syndrome of becoming public knowledge. Abu`Abdillah succeeded in convincing Shaikh `Abdullah that this activity had to be special and

secret. When the Shaikh objected that the Military Committee formed part of the Office committees, Abu`Abdillah convinced him that the work of the committee was one thing and our work another thing. In the end Shaikh `Abdullah was persuaded and told me 'okay, you proceed in the Military Committee and receive the moral direction, but it is better that we involve your brothers in the Military Committee. They brought Nuruddin the Palestinian. The Sadda Camp was now a fait accompli, recognized by the Military Committee and its command. By throwing the dice I was then chosen to be the head [amir] of the Sadda Camp. The Battle of Jaji had just begun and they went into jihad. One day I was surprised by a two or three cars (Flankog) full of brothers coming from Peshawar. One of them said: 'I am bringing you the brothers as you had requested.'

'What is that?' I asked.

He replied: 'Brother, you summoned us and we came.'

I said: 'Gracious God, neither did we summon anyone nor did we sent you anything.'

'How come?' he said and took out a letter from Shaikh `Abdullah in which called upon the married and the unmarried, the employed and the unemployed, the physician, the teacher and the engineer, calling all of them to the battle of [p. 200] Jaji.

I was at a complete loss what to do. Where would those brothers sleep? Wherefrom to get food for them? We sent word to Shaikh Sayyaf and got from him whatever bread was available. We even took the blankets from the room in which he slept, may God reward him for this a thousand times. The brothers who had come said 'how come that you do not provide for us? Where are the tents? Where?!

Then there was the matter of the brothers proceeding to Jaji. Their return is well-known. Their position was a liability for the Afghans rather than a help. Therefore we got together once again and said 'we must move to another place.' And really, Abu`Abdillah did open another camp in Sadda, but that one got known too. When the brothers learned about it they objected and expressed their anger. This upset Abu`Abdillah who then told them: 'Until now I have not said anything, keeping quiet about everything. Your misbehavior has all been noted down by AbuHajar, yet I remained silent. I should be the one to take you to task.'

From that moment on Abu`Abdillah began to do his work separately and to turn in a new direction."

The word "separation" sounds very harsh and is difficult to cope with, in a work that had not even seen the completion of its second year, moreover in a place where lives were sacrificed and blood spilled. These kind of different outlooks and the lack of agreement ought not to have effected the brotherly relations between all of us at the time. In fact, Abu`Abdillah was just as eager to keep on coordinating the activities and continue cooperation under all circumstances as Dr. `Abdullah was. In the words of AbuHajar:

"Abu`Abdillah did not announce his separation publicly because he is averse to disunity. The day I said to him 'let us dissolve everything and start the work afresh he opposed it and told me 'once our size is again as big as it is now we will split again.' Every time he met me he reproached me for having abandoned the work. He has been reproaching me from that time on till now."

AbuHajar was of the opinion, however, that it was not possible to continue for long. From his point of view Abu`Abdillah was too much given to centralization. He wanted to have all the Arabs together in one place, train them and prepare them to become an operational jihad brigade.

Shaikh `Abdullah, by contrast, pursued a policy of reaching out. Differences of style combined with differences in procedure, plus differences in methods of executing programs and the methods of choosing persons for executive tasks. The result was that one would chose one person and the other another. This one would have his method of getting things done whereas the other would use a different method. Subsequently the objective of one would not be the objective of the other. Therefore each one of the two moved in a different direction."

More or less the same was pointed out by Shaikh Tamim Al-`Adnani, of blessed memory, when he said: "Shaikh `Abdullah and I were of the opinion that the Arabs should be made to merge with the Afghans right away, in the service of the Afghans. Abu`Abdillah might have considered the Afghan cause as more useful for us in terms of

training than it would benefit us as individuals. It was as if he wanted us to profit from the jihad rather than the jihad profiting from us, whereas we wanted the jihad to benefit from us rather than us benefiting from the jihad. The conceptual difference is a very minor one since it was jihad in either case."

[p. 201] Footnotes

Al-Ansar al-Arab

Part III

The Sha`ban Battle

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The young men of Al-Ma'sadda were full of zest, bursting with vitality and longing for activity. They had tasted easy victory and experienced the pleasure of quick success. When Abu'Abdillah allowed them to bombard the government outpost it was a moral boost to them that filled them with enthusiasm. This decision itself was a turning point in the development of Al-Ma'sadda, making it the scene of direct confrontation. It meant responding to the challenge a year and a half after its creation. Abu'Abdillah says:

"I felt that the brothers had not yet reached the level that would allow them to meet the enemy. The base had not yet been developed to the point that it could withstand a direct confrontation, despite the brothers' high morale and their patience. The few trenches in Al-Ma'sadda were hardly worth mentioning. We did not want to deal the enemy a blow that would not break his back but rather expose us to his reactions that we were ill

prepared to meet. But then the number of brothers increased and they continued training. When the Egyptian commander AbuKhalid came, together with Abu`Obaida, they reasoned that, despite our limited resources, we were in a position to win a battle and take the outpost called 'Mother of Trenches' as well as the outpost called An-Nayima.

Some of the young men had wanted to leave the Jihad, disappointed that with us they got no chance to take part in operations. They could not put up with a Jihad that had become a war of fixed positions and us not leading them into action. The decision for a Sha`ban Battle (Sha`ban is an Islamic month) was a compromise, therefore, especially since some of them would go back and tell people that they had spent six months without having fired a single shot at the enemy. People believe that Mujahidin do not stand in need of victory. But not all of them have a strong enough awareness to understand that the Jihad will go on for a long time. Obedience has its limits, especially since only few of the brothers have known us for a long time, even though the group has been together for six months, digging trenches and undergoing weapons' training. Anyhow, they are just common Muslims, not military personnel. All these reasons pushed us to take this decision. In addition there was the opinion of AbuKhalid and Abu`Obaida, men with military experience, who said that we were in a position to carry out the battle."

To a large extent the attack idea was clear and simple. The Arab brothers had kept a strict surveillance on the "Mother of Trenches" and the Nayima outpost next to it. As mentioned earlier, they had carried out some skirmishes against both

outposts. Since these two positions were closer to Al-Ma'sadda than other outposts it was but logical to choose them as the first targets for an attack from Al-Ma'sadda. Our military operations aimed at liberating the valley with the surrounding hills from enemy forces. That was to be expected and we had been waiting to do so. As for the attack plan itself, let AbuKhalid brief us about it, since he was the battle leader.

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"I got news that the brothers in Al-Ma'sadda were preparing a military operation to break the stalemate in the area and to raise the morale of the Arabs and Afghans by inflicting losses on the enemy. Together with AbuHafs I then went to Al-Ma'sadda where we met Shaikh Banshiri (Pansheri) as Abu'Obaida the Egyptian was called. In the course of our consultations we reached a consensus to carry out a fire attack against both enemy outposts as well as against Khirshtal. We would make use of this bombardment to liberate two positions close to us that are among important enemy outposts, to wit, the 'Mother of Trenches' and 'An-Nayima.' Making all the necessary preparations we divided the Ma'sadda forces into two major sections:

The first one we called the 'Terror Group.' Its task was to take all enemy posts under concentrated fire, from far, directing rocket and cannon fire at them.

The second we called the 'Conquest Group.' Its task was to occupy both outposts, take prisoners, destroy the fortifications, and return to Al-Ma'sadda. The second group was in turn divided into three branch groups: two for penetrating the positions and the third to secure the terrain."

Abu`Abdillah himself continues the description of the battle preparations as follows:

"Over a period of two weeks we sent a group of brothers to keep watch on the 'Mother of Trenches' and An-Nayima. They were seven, of whom I remember Shafiq and AbuDhahab, who were joined by Usama. We went to see them, AbuKhalid the Egyptian, AbuHafs the Egyptian, and I. They had erected a tent below the 'Mother of Trenches,' to the South of it. In our positions that were not more 100 meters from the enemy we could see them and hear their voices. In the night, using night glasses, the brothers got as close as 30 meters to them. All that prevented them from entering the outpost were the mines!"

At noon time you could go there and find Shafiq and Dhabih sleeping. Once when I got there together with AbuHafs the Egyptian I found one of the brothers sleeping peacefully as if he were at home. He was exhausted from his night watch. I was asked a religious question that greatly impressed me and I asked myself, is not a great thing at the end of times there are people in Muhammad's Community who ask this question! They asked me, 'are we allowed to follow the ritual when we hear them call to prayer, or do we call to prayer and pray?'

This was because some government soldiers, who are in the army as forced conscripts, perform the call to prayer and pray. I said, 'praised be the Lord Who will be pleased that you get so close to the enemy that you hear his soldiers' call to prayer. By God, I like this question more than the answer.

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Usama "Azmara'i" recorded his reminiscences of those days as follows:

"The last time I went from Peshawar to Jaji I found Abu`Abdillah and greeted him, - in those days my

hand was still paining because the wound had not fully healed. He told me that Shafiq, AbuDhahab, Dhabih, Sakhri, Bishi, and Husain the Libyan were in the tent beneath the 'Mother of Trenches.' I then took my leave from him in order to join them quickly. He told to me to wait however. I had arrived in the afternoon and he made me stay over night. In the morning I set out and got to the tent. Abu'Abdillah had handed the Badr Room over to 'Abdu-r-Rahman the Egyptian. He trusted him after he had undergone a good amount of practical training that enabled him to shoot from Badr with a Howitzer or a Cannon 75. He knew how to organize the men there and to lead them and he was familiar with the mountain in which Badr is situated. Therefore I began to move between the tent and Badr.

In this period good things happened to Al-Ma'sadda and the life of the brothers who had come for Jihad. Whenever the brothers who listened to the enemy got to hear something alarming they reinforced their night vigil. I liked their way of combining listening and seeing which enabled them to gather the largest amount of information on the enemy's movement.

One night Abu'Abdillah contacted us at Badr, asking us to be extremely vigilant. It was as if they had information that the enemy was likely to try and penetrate from the Badr side. That night we sent the men out and fixed the arms in their place, thinking how to ward off any force coming up to us. There were only few trenches, and those had been dug by the Russian commandos who had been there before us. All the same, we put two persons into each place, with one sleeping bag for the two of them, so one would wake while the other sleeps. Myself and another brother would go round to check on them and then move down to contact the brothers

below to find out if there was anything suspicious going on.

From that point on we were experiencing progress in Al-Ma'sadda inasmuch as use of the wireless and the coordination of the different positions is concerned. This enabled our leader, Abu'Abdillah, to dispatch any group from any side at any time.

The only problem was that some of the new brothers could not be easily made to stick to discipline. Some of them were constantly hyper. They might see a monkey or some imaginary creature move around in the trees and would open fire rightaway. They were just not given to reflection and were not familiar with the terrain. For this reason we took the new ones round on inspection tours of the area as a kind of refreshment training, even if they had received training in Sadda.

While we were busy doing this the leadership was fully occupied doing many things at a time. They were forced to think practically. While it had been difficult to take the decision in the first place, giving the instructions was quite easy, though implementing it could be difficult again. The brothers began {P. 264} defining the weapons they wanted. Brother AbuKhalid the Egyptian was a military officer, and so was AbuHafs. Their thinking and planning was of a military type, therefore. The conditions of an army do of course differ from those of the Mujahidin or the guerrilla units amongst whom we are living. This was the cause for a number of disparities. The essential shortcoming, however, was that they were too theoretic in their thinking and that they took greater interest in the planning aspect than in the practical side and the implementation. As is well-known, the more complicated a plan is the more difficult it is to carry it out. The entire program

was time-bound, and any program that depends on proper timing is difficult to carry out. For instance, the brothers wanted there to be fifty P.M. rockets, but they did not take into consideration the time it takes to move those fifty rockets to the bottom of the valley, which means a march of an hour and a half by itself. Then moving them again to the top, which requires a minimum of 45 minutes, to which is to be added another half an hour to set up each one of the rockets and point it towards its target.

I believe that had they moved the weapons first and then fixed the time for the operation it would have been more appropriate. They, however, fixed first the time, coordinated it with the other Mujahidin, without having anything moved to its place yet."

Fixing the zero hour for the start of the battle was not up to the Arabs alone, it had to be coordinated with the Afghans in the Ittihad and the Hizb. This meant taking into consideration their special circumstances and opinions, even if they would not directly participate. Abu-r-Rida relates: "Abu'Abdillah was of the opinion that we should work things out with the Hizb in Ghundu-l-fath and with the Ittihad, with each one separately. Given our good relations with all of them we reached an agreement and requested Al-Fath to help us bombard Chauni with L.P.M. Dwazda, and also to fire on the outposts in the valley.

Shaikh Sayyaf said: 'I am coming to you on Sunday to see.' We started to move the P.M. rockets before Sayyaf even arrived. Together with the other things we moved the rockets on the four or five mules that we had to the observation tent. The idea was to

have all the weapons together in one place and then to distribute them from there.

Shaikh Sayyaf's coming on Sunday was to serve the purpose of devising a battle plan, but when he arrived on Sunday he simply said, 'the operation will take place tomorrow, Monday.'

Sure, we had planned the operation and worked things out with the Hizb, but our preparations were not yet completed, so we told him, 'Shaikh, we are not ready yet, it is impossible.'

I remember that he gave us two or three days, maximum, to complete everything, prepare and start executing the operation. We all thought that those three days would be enough because our planning was done. All that was left to do {P. 265} was to make the weapons and ammunition reach the nearby tent. In reality the time was less than required however. When the mules were about to die because of exhaustion we were forced to open another way to the valley bottom, which we did by using a bulldozer. Then we sent the stuff by car."